

Hazardous Household Products

Household hazardous products represent an unregulated waste stream that can lead to environmental contamination when improperly disposed.

What happens to improperly disposed of hazardous household products?

1. Hazardous household products that are flushed down the drain, poured onto the ground, or dumped into storm drains pollute the Bay's waters and possibly your drinking water.
2. Disposal of hazardous materials in a municipal landfill contributes to the potential for hazardous chemicals to leach from the landfill and increases landfill space.
3. Materials that easily evaporate contribute to air pollution.

Is a household product hazardous?

Certain signal words on labels indicate a hazardous household product. Look for these signal words and avoid buying. Products without signal words are the least hazardous.

Signal Word	Meaning
Poison	highly toxic
Danger	extremely flammable, corrosive, or highly toxic
Warning	moderate hazard
Caution	mid/moderate hazard

What can I do?

Reduce the amount of hazardous materials used around home. Many less toxic/hazardous alternatives exist.

Recycle by giving leftovers to a friend or community organization.

Properly dispose:

When unable to reduce or recycle, follow proper disposal procedures. When in doubt, contact the Maryland Department of the Environment at (410) 631-3344. Local health departments may offer periodic household hazardous waste collection days. Check with the local health department to see what products are accepted.

Common Hazardous Household Products - Disposal and Alternative Options:

Product	Disposal	Alternatives
Enamel/Oil-based Paint/Stain	Use up, or give to someone who can use it. Otherwise, store for a household hazardous waste collection day.	Use latex or water-based paint.
Paint Thinner	Recycle by keeping in tightly closed jar and allowing paint particles to settle. Strain through a fine mesh sieve and re-use thinner. Let the sludge dry in a	Avoid the use of paint thinners by using water-based paint.

well-ventilated area, wrap in newspaper, and dispose of in garbage.

Paint Strippers	Use up, or give to someone who can use it. Otherwise, hold for a household hazardous waste collection day.	If paint does not contain lead, use scraper, heat gun, or sandpaper to remove paint. Water and alkali-based strippers are less toxic.
Latex/Water-based Paint	Use completely, or give away to someone who can use it. Otherwise, air dry unwanted paint in the can and mix with kitty litter. Dispose of dried paint in the garbage.	Use whitewash for fences, barns, and outbuildings. Use new, low-volatility paints.
Pesticides	If the pesticide is not expired, banned, or restricted, use completely. Triple-rinse empty pesticide containers with water. Apply rinse water as per product instructions. Dispose of empty container in trash. Otherwise, hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Many alternatives exist, including nonchemical controls like beneficial insects. Contact your county extension office for more information.
Drain Cleaners	Fully use and dispose of empty container in trash. Otherwise, hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Use a drain strainer. Don't pour grease down the drain. Use a plunger, or flush with boiling water, baking soda, vinegar mixture.
Thermometer-Mercury	Don't vacuum up mercury, or touch it. Use cardboard to push mercury droplets together and enclose in a glass bottle. Contact a dentist to see if he/she accepts. Otherwise, hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Use a flex-tape, electronic or other non-mercury thermometer.